

To our Washington neighbors:

November 2017

Over 20 residents got their shots at the flu clinic held at the Town Hall on October 16, the best turnout since we began having the clinic!

A few months ago in the August *Tracks* we reported that the Board had met with Pittsfield Mayor Tyer to resolve the 32 year-old promise made to transfer 5 acres of the Pittsfield watershed property to the Town for use as a cemetery. Pittsfield has now agreed to the transfer. We expect that this may be a drawn-out legal process, but Pittsfield's willingness is the key to making it happen!

The mapping for our Broadband network has been completed and we expect to have a system design from Westfield Gas and Electric before the end of this year.

- We have received our initial funding (\$220,000 of the \$490,000 total) from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development which should cover the design phase of the project.
- Once the design is complete we will be putting the construction out to bid for completion as soon as possible!
- In the letter sent by the Board to thank Lt. Governor Polito for holding a Town Hall, we took the opportunity to ask for help with getting renewable energy for the Town. The Governor's Western MA representative, Mike Knapik, is following up for us.

Thanks to Dick Spencer and his committee we have made some progress towards resolving the patchwork of small lots in Virginia Lake Estates that do not meet zoning requirements.

- Thanks to Dick for also obtaining a grant to see how the Town can best use the landlocked 43 acres behind the Town Park.

Road & Bridge:

- MA DOT has remained adamant that their involvement in the Washington Mountain Road reconstruction is over. Moreover, DOT now states that what we thought was full-depth reclamation only went 12" deep. If the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile section that showed a "W" pattern does not hold up we may have to seek a legal remedy.
- Frost Road was reopened on October 18 and the Summit Hill Road bridge over the CSX tracks should be open by the time you are reading this.
- Our engineer – Foresight - has evaluated the existing abutments of the Middlefield Road bridge over Coles Brook and cannot certify their use for a new span. This means that the \$250,000 Small Bridge grant we received will cover less than half the expected cost. We are requesting that the grant be increased to \$500,000 – the maximum allowed by the grant program.
- The cost of even small rural spans and culverts is an issue that we have repeatedly raised with our legislative delegation. We have asked for simplified and common designs, simplified approval processes and having pre-fab structures available. In fairness the Small Bridge program was intended to help small communities like Washington, but it does not address the cost issue – merely diverts it to all taxpayers.

We hope everyone got out to the Pumpkin Walk!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board Clerk

Dick Grillon
Select Board